

What is claimed is:

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1. A method for decrypting an encrypted, two-part file which comprises the steps of:
 - decrypting a first part of said file using a first key;
 - 5 ascertaining a second key from said first part of said file during said decrypting step; and
 - employing said second key to decrypt a second part of said file for use in revealing said second part.
- 10 2. A method as recited in claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
 - presenting said file on the Internet;
 - selecting said file from the Internet, and
 - sending said first part of said file to a transaction agent for accomplishment of said decrypting step and said ascertaining step.
- 15 3. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein said first key is a public key provided by a transaction agent and said second key is a private key.
4. A method as recited in claim 3 wherein said employing step is accomplished by said transaction agent.
5. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein said employing step is accomplished by a buyer.
- 20 6. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein said file is periodically changed.
7. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein said first part is an overhead including said second key and having commercial material about said file, said commercial material including pricing and payment terms.

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8. A method as recited in claim 7 further comprising a header having advertising material about said content and informational material about the seller.

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9. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein said second part is a content.

10. A method as recited in claim 9 wherein said content includes work selected from a group consisting of books, documents, pamphlets, movies, songs, games, pictures and software.

10 11. A method for conducting encrypted commercial transactions between a buyer and a seller, wherein said method involves a transaction agent and comprises the steps of:

15 presenting a file, said file being created by the seller and containing at least an overhead and a content, said overhead being encrypted with a first key and at least a portion of said content being encrypted with a second key;

decrypting said overhead of said file by employing said first key to ascertain said second key; and

decrypting said content of said file by employing said second key to reveal said file for use by said buyer.

20 12. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein said presenting step is accomplished on an Internet, and further wherein said first key is a public key and said second key is a private key.

25 13. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein said step of decrypting said overhead to ascertain said second key is accomplished by said transaction agent.

14. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein said step of decrypting said content of said file to reveal said file from the Internet is accomplished by said transaction agent.

5 15. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein said step of decrypting said content of said file to reveal said file from the Internet is accomplished by said buyer.

10 16. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein said overhead includes said second key and commercial material about said file, said commercial material including pricing and payment terms, and further wherein said content includes work selected from a group consisting of books, documents, pamphlets, movies, songs, games, pictures and software.

17. A system for transferring an encrypted file over the Internet which comprises:

15 a transaction agent;
a public key;
a private key;
a seller for creating said file and publishing said file on the Internet, said file having at least a first part and a second part with said first part being encrypted using said public key and said second part being encrypted with said private key; and
20 a buyer for selecting said file from the Internet and sending said first part of said file to said transaction agent for decryption thereof by said transaction agent using said public key to ascertain said private key for subsequent use in decrypting and revealing said second part of
25 said file for use by said buyer.

18. A system as recited in claim 17 wherein said private key is provided by said seller.

19. A system as recited in claim 17 wherein said first part is an overhead and includes said second key and commercial material about said file, said commercial material including pricing and payment terms, and further wherein said second part is a content and includes work selected from a group consisting of books, documents, pamphlets, movies, songs, games, pictures and software.

20. A system as recited in claim 17 wherein said file has a value established by said seller and said system further comprises:

a buyer's account maintained by said transaction agent for said buyer;

a seller's account maintained by said transaction agent for said seller; and

means for transferring funds of said value from said buyer's account to said seller's account when said second part of said file is revealed.